

Message Text

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14

ACTION NEA-10

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P 200325Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY KABUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5092

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE KABUL 7572

STADIS

E. O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: AFSP, AF

SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATION TO ABOLISH ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL
OFFICER POSITION

FOR M AND NEA

REF: A) STATE 272398; B) KABUL 804 (STADIS) DATED FEB 5, 1975

1. EMBASSY KABUL BELIEVES THAT ABOLITION OF THE POSITION CITED
REFTEL (A) WILL SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE ITS ABILITY TO CARRY OUT ITS
TRADE PROMOTION ACTIVITIES AND RECOMMENDS THAT THIS POSITION
BE RETAINED.

2. THE S/IG FOREIGN SERVICE INSPECTION REPORT ON KABUL OF 1974,
INTER ALIA, STATED THAT THE ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL SECTION HAD BEEN
CHARGED WITH EXTENSIVE REPORTING, IN-DEPTH LIAISON WITH THE
LARGE USAID MISSION, AND TRADE PROMOTION EFFORTS. THE REPORT
ALSO SPECIFICALLY ACKNOWLEDGED THE DIFFICULTY OF FULFILLING THESE
TASKS WITH ONLY TWO OFFICERS -- AS HAD BEEN THE CASE IN THE PERIOD
PRECEDING THE INSPECTION.

3. SINCE THE INSPECTION REPORT OF 1974 (JUST OVER A YEAR AGO),
AND WITH THREE OFFICERS, THE ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL SECTION HAS
HAD SIGNIFICANT SUCCESS IN INCREASING IN-DEPTH EVALUATION

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REPORTING, WHILE MAINTAINING ITS CLOSE CONTACT AND LIAISON

WITH USAID -- ONE OF THE LARGEST TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS IN THE WORLD -- AND EXPANDING THE ECONOMIC SECTION'S EFFORTS IN TRADE PROMOTION, PARTICULARLY IN RELATION TO ASSISTING MAJOR PROJECT BIDS BY U.S. FIRMS. PROGRESS HAS ALSO BEEN MADE IN ENCOURAGING U.S. FIRMS TO ESTABLISH REGULAR CONTACTS, REPRESENTATION, AND SALES EFFORTS IN AFGHANISTAN. THIS HAS BEEN POSSIBLE BECAUSE OF THE FLEXIBILITY PROVIDED BY HAVING THREE OFFICER POSITIONS IN THE ECONOMIC SECTION.

4. IF THE SECTION WERE REDUCED TO TWO OFFICERS THERE WOULD BE LESS TIME AVAILABLE FOR MONITORING AID PROGRAMS, CONDUCTING COUNTRY-WIDE RESEARCH, INVESTIGATING INVESTMENT AND EXPORT OPPORTUNITIES, AND ASSISTING VISITING U.S. BUSINESSMEN IN PURSUING THESE OPPORTUNITIES.

5. WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT PRIORITY THE DEPARTMENTS OF STATE AND COMMERCE PLACE ON TRADE PROMOTION IN A COUNTRY LIKE AFGHANISTAN, BUT WE CONSIDER THIS A PROGRAM WITH PROSPECTS OF SIGNIFICANT SUCCESS, PARTICULARLY IN LIGHT OF INCREASING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM OPEC COUNTRIES. ABOLISHING ONE ECON/COMMERCIAL POSITION WOULD ADVERSELY AFFECT THOSE PROSPECTS.

6. IN REF B, KABUL DETAILED ITS REASONS FOR DESIRING TO RETAIN THE ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL POSITION AT THAT TIME. THOSE REASONS REMAIN VALID, AND HAVE GAINED STRENGTH FROM THE EVENTS OF THE INTERVENING PERIOD. WE WISH TO UNDERLINE OUR BELIEF THAT BASIC CONTROL OF OTHER MISSION ELEMENTS BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT (IN THIS CASE BY THE ECONOMIC SECTION -- AND PLEASE NOTE THAT THE AID PROGRAM IS EXPANDING RPT EXPANDING) IS ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY A REDUCTION IN FSO'S.

7. WHILE WE COULD LIVE WITH AN ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL REDUCTION IN FY 1976, WE WOULD PREFER TO DELAY A DECISION ON THIS UNTIL A FURTHER REVIEW OF THE U.S. BUSINESS INVESTMENT SITUATION DURING THE COURSE OF FY 1977.
ELIOT

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